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A BOAT WAS ALREADY BEING LAUNCHED TO THE RESCUE.

A Mother's Lost Boy.

A TALE OF THE WILD EAST COAST.

('Sunday Friend.')

CHAPTER I.

Middlewick is a little village on the east coast of England, a village with queer, tumble-down old houses; crooked narrow streets, paved with shingle from the beach; and an eventful history of wreckage and smuggling. Of late years it has grown ambitious, and has tacked 'On Sea' to the end of its name; while speculative builders have even described it on their bills as 'a rising and attractive watering-place.' But chalk and cheese are more allied to each other than Middlewick-on-Sea and ordinary seaside resorts. No pier runs out with great spidery legs into the bay; no band mingles its music with that of the waves among the pebbles; no bathing machines, no donkeys, hold out attractions to visitors. The boats on the beach are not cockle-shell pleasure skiffs, but honest, rough, clumsy, broad-beamed craft, scarred and seamed and battered, like their owners, with hard work and weather. Instead of huge arcades of shops, two little general stores, selling everything, from bootlaces to butcher's meat, supply the wants of the community; and the 'Rose and Crown Inn' has not yet risen to the dignity of a 'Hotel.'

But there is one thing common to all watering-places of which Middlewick can boast—its 'Season.' Every summer the standing population of some hundred odd souls receives a reinforcement of two or three dozen visitors. A few people come down because they honestly like the place, preferring, strangely enough, the shingly beach, up and down which the waves charge ceaselessly, the funny old houses and the funny old streets, the quaint, honest fisher folk, and the smell of tarred nets and ropes, to all the attractions of Londons by the Sea. And others—curates and ministers, clerks and shop assistants, with large families and small incomes—find that Middlewick suits their pockets better than Brighton or Margate or Eastbourne; and gives them quite as much health and quite as much tan on their faces, in exchange for their money.

The day on which the incidents I am about to relate took place was the last of the 189— season, a wild, windy, autumn day, with big clouds tearing madly across the sky, and big breakers tearing madly up and down the coast line. Now, as the first and last days of the season are movable dates, determined by the arrival of the first visitors, and the departure of the latest, it follows that some of Middlewick's guests were bidding the little village farewell for another year. Those last to leave on this occasion were the Rev. John Tidsworth, his wife and five small children, who were going back brown and freckled to their home in an East-end parish.

All Middlewick turned out to bid them farewell, and furnish a guard of honor. Farmer Hobson's cart had been commissioned to take them to the station, three miles distant; and when it turned the corner of the road, and the thin form of the curate, the buxom, rounded figure of his wife, the podgy bodies of the shouting children, and the mound of boxes, bags, spades, pails and umbrellas, which quite hid both horse and driver from view, had disappeared, the gaiety of Middlewick seemed for the time eclipsed.

'It's kind of lonely without them already,' said one good woman, tucking a handkerchief which she had been desperately waving, into her bodice. The handkerchief was like a white flag of truce; for many and many a battle had she waged with the Tidsworth children during the last few weeks. 'Lively little sparks them children was,' she continued, 'as no one knows better than me, what with their balls and things always clattering up against my windows, and their crabs and messy seaweed always thrown among my plants. Still, I'm sorry they're gone.'

'So am I, Mrs. 'Arding; so am I,' said another woman, in whose house the family had been staying.

'Well, that's nat'ral, I suppose. Thirty-five shillings a week for rooms'——

'Oh, I don't mean that,' said Mrs. Madden rather proudly. 'Thank goodness we

aren't dependent on letting; and I must say it has its disadvantages. For some things I'm rather glad to be quiet again. I haven't had a moment to myself ever since they've been here; and one does like to get a chat with one's neighbors now and then. Still, I'm sorry they're gone, and after all, the money is a consideration.'

'You're right there, Mrs. Madden. I don't say but what my husband and me could 'ave worried on without it; we've weathered a good many bad seasons together, but still, as you say, it is a help; and we've let uncommon well this year.'

'So's everybody, I think,' chimed in another woman. 'It's been a good season all round; I don't think anyone's had much to grumble at, except, perhaps, Mrs. Ransom.'

'Well, it's her own fault, altogether,' said Mrs. Harding. 'She's had her chance, same as the rest of us, but if a woman will be so extraordinary, what can she expect? None of her lodgers'll stay there more than a few days, she treats them so very singular. You heard the way she served Mr. Parsons?'

'What was that?' asked everyone; though they had heard the story and commented on it a hundred times. Mr. Parsons was a well-to-do artist—a millionnaire, in the eyes of Middlewick—who had stayed for a few weeks at the little fishing village.

'Well,' Mrs. Harding continued, 'you know Mr. Parsons was going to give a dinner to some of his relations and friends, who were coming up from London. He'd ordered everything over from Sandbourne, hampers and hampers of poultry, and pastries and vegetables, the very best that money could buy, and Mrs. Ransom was to cook 'em all for seven o'clock dinner. The guests came, and so did seven o'clock; but when Mr. Parsons went out into the kitchen to see why dinner wasn't served, there wasn't a sign of Mrs. Ransom, nor cooking, nor nothing—not a sign!'

'No?' said the little crowd of women in a breath; though they knew the story as well as Mrs. Harding herself.

'Yes,' that lady answered emphatically, nodding her head. 'Not a sign. So they had to dine off cold victles, which they got ready themselves, and after dinner when they went for a stroll on the shore, before their train went, who did they see but Mrs. Ransom looking out at sea through that old telescope of hers, and thinking no more of them nor the dinner than the man in the moon. If she treats her lodgers like that, I don't see what she can expect.'

'She's never been the same since that son of hers went away,' said Mrs. Madden. 'Always prowling about the sea, looking out, looking out; especially when it's a bit rough, though she hates the water like poison. Good reason, too, poor thing, it took her husband away from her, and now I think her son going off has clean turned her head.'

'Well, well,' said Mrs. Harding, 'we've all had our troubles—I've had mine like the rest, only I try not to give way to them.' And Mrs. Harding, whose greatest troubles in life had been little campaigns against measles and chicken-pox during the bringing up of her children, stalked off with a virtuous air to her cottage. 'I must be getting in too,' said Mrs. Madden. 'Going to be a dirty night, I think; the fine weather's come to an end with the season.'

The other women followed her example, and in a few minutes Middlewick High street was deserted.

CHAPTER II.

Mrs. Madden's surmise was correct—it was a nasty night, one of the nastiest that had been known for years along the coast. As the women of Middlewick looked across the tables in their little cottages, where, in the lamp-light, they were busy over household mending and making for the winter, they thanked God that the burly forms of their husbands met their eyes, and that none of their kith and kin were out upon the bosom of the raging deep.

Mrs. Harding's husband sat in an arm-chair before the fire, which the chill autumn evening rendered necessary; Mrs. Harding's children slept in warm beds upstairs; Mrs. Harding's larder was filled with wholesome provisions; Mrs. Harding's pocket was lined with gold and silver. She had spoken a few hours before about her troubles, but bearing them did not seem such a trial to her as one might have imagined, from the Spartanic way in which she had spoken of them to her neighbors.

Mrs. Ransom sat that evening in another Middlewick cottage, but her surroundings were very different. No cheerful fire glowed in the grate, the flickering candle-light shone on no children's stockings, with big 'potatoes' in the heels of them, and no friendly eyes looked into hers from across the table. Mrs. Ransom was alone.

She was thinking, as she sat in that barely furnished room, of a time when there had been mending to do—when that empty arm-chair by the fireplace was filled, when a little bed up above wanted tucking in every evening, when the larder was full of good victuals, and when there was plenty of money in her pockets to buy more food with whenever it was needed.

But that was years ago. Years? It seemed like centuries. The world itself had changed since that sad evening when her husband's body was brought, mangled and lifeless, from the cruel sea. And her boy? How she had worked for him, slaved for him, trying to scrape together enough to put him to some honest home-keeping trade, and to wean him from the love of that remorseless enemy which had robbed him of his father. But the love of the sea was in his blood, in every nerve and sinew and fibre of his body, and so Dick Ransom, leaving only a line of farewell, set forth one day to try his fortune on the great waters. By and by letters came, dated from queerly-named places, and with queer looking stamps on the envelopes, and for a time this kept away absolute despair. Then came weary weeks and months of waiting, during which no news reached her, and at last word came to Middlewick that Jack's ship, the 'Bonnie Doon,' had foundered with all hands.

Well, 'We all have our troubles,' as Mrs. Harding said, but there were some who did not wonder that the widow's head seemed 'clean turned' by the news, that she hated the sea with a great hatred, yet still hoped madly against hope that it might yield up her treasure. There were some mothers who did not wonder that she forgot all about her visitors when a strange ship passed, beating up towards harbor, but rushed out with her husband's old glass to the beach, and peered anxiously through it, to see if perchance the name 'Bonnie Doon' might be painted on the vessel's timbers. There were some fathers, weather-beaten, hard-handed (though not hard-hearted) old fishermen, who did not wonder that in the little village church she always joined so heartily in that hymn, 'For those in peril on the sea.'

She had a queer discordant voice, no two notes were in tune, yet she hummed that hymn this evening as she peered out through the window into the wild night. The beach was white with foam, for miles one could see the gleam of the tossing wave-creasts.

At last Mrs. Ransom went up to bed, earlier than most of her neighbors, for even the price of candle-light had to be studied. Yet she could not sleep. The rattling of the window-panes, the noise of wind and wave, the anxious thoughts that would fill her mind, in spite of Mrs. Harding's well-meant assurance that there was no longer any cause or use for them, kept her awake, tossing to and fro upon her bed. Suddenly the booming of a gun sounded above the noise of the storm, loud voices beneath her window, and the clatter of hurrying footsteps, told her that a vessel was lying in distress off Middlewick, and springing out of bed she flung on a few garments and hastened down to the beach.

A boat was already being launched to the rescue, and women and men together were starting it on its perilous journey. Three fishermen had already taken their places in in it, a fourth sprang in just as Mrs. Ransom reached the shore. Seized with a sudden impulse, 'in one of her mad fits' the people said afterwards, she thrust her way through the little group, rushed through the boiling serf and sprang into the boat just as a retreating wave swept it from the beach.

'Go back! come back!' shouted the men in the boat, and the women on the shore, but it was too late.

'May as well be useful while you're here,' growled one of the men, "cause you'll have to stay here now. Just give an eye to that rope; let out some of the slack if you find it straining.'

Middlewick is not well supplied with life-saving apparatus, being only a primitive village, and the only way to transmit a rope to the doomed vessel was for the boat to carry it out from the shore. Even then it was a difficult matter to get it on board the ship.

'Look out, now,' said Harding, who was in charge of the rescue party, 'we'll be battered to pieces if we once get washed up agen her. Green, you can throw farthest, have a shot at chucking the rope, while we hang on the oars.'

The men straightened every muscle to keep the boat as close as possible to the ship, while Green threw the rope—threw again and again, for each time it fell short of its object.

'It's no use, 'Arding, I can't——' he began, when Mrs. Ransom sprang up and snatched it from his hand. The next moment, crying loudly, so the men said afterwards, the name of her missing boy, 'Jack,' she sprang from the boat and was carried in the mad rush of water towards the ship.

The men who were waiting anxiously on the wrecked ship, just managed to catch her as she was dashed against the side of their vessel. In her hand, clutched tightly, and twisted round the wrist, was the rope-end, and before morning dawned passengers and crew were all landed, by means of it, on Middlewick beach. The captain brought with him, along the rope, the poor battered body of their rescuer.

And was her missing son really there? The coroner asked that at the inquest; but there was no Jack Ransom among the rescued, and Middlewick people told him that his body lay fathoms deep, thousands of miles away. 'Only another of Mrs. Ransom's mad fancies, sir,' they said. Yet it is not every mad fancy which can save a score of lives.

Information gathered from the leading officials of forty-five railways employing 200,000 men shows that, without exception, the companies regard habitual drinking as hurtful to the efficiency of the service, and they forbid the use of intoxicants to employees while on duty. Fourteen of the roads require total abstinence from intoxicants for all men connected with train service.

BOYS AND GIRLS

Skip's Victoria Cross.

CHAPTER I.

Such a pouring wet day there had not been all that summer, not even during St. Swithin's dismal reign. The young Wentworths had played at every game they knew, and they had sat as long over their dinner riddle-mareeing as Nurse Tweedy would suffer them. Then, there was the afternoon to get through, and long before tea-time the children were as tired out as though they had not been to bed for a week.

'Let's sit round the fire!' suggested one of the twins.

'Yes, let's sit round the fire!' echoed the other twin, the two never failing to prop each other up thus.

'Well done, little shavers!' cried Skip, the second of the Wentworths, whose real name was Reginald. 'Round the fire-place, I suppose you mean.'

'Oh, yeth!' lisped Bunchy, the little sister bustling forward with her own little wicker-chair on her back, to seat herself in front of the empty grate. 'Come and sit round, and let's clasp hands,' she added, when her six brothers pushing, laughing, pinching, took their seats, three on either side of the little maid facing the cheerless black grate.

When each of the circle obeyed by locking their own hands together it was found as usual that the only right thumb that overlapped the left belonged to Skip.

'"Born to rule!"' shrieked Bunchy, excitedly.

'"Born to rule!"' chorussed the boys, and the Skipper rose to make a low bow.

Well, it would never have done if all the Wentworth right thumbs had been uppermost. There could only be one skipper for the crew, and Reggie made a first-rate one. At Dene Hurst, the great house just outside of the village of Dene, there were seven children, six boys and one little sister, and from the beginning Reggie had always taken the lead.

'Just his father over again! He's born to lead, Master Reggie is. Some folk be!' declared Nurse Tweedy, the dignified old lady who had brought up every Wentworth in Dene Hurst, and their father before them, the late Sir James, whom Nurse Tweedy vividly recollected as the tiresomest baby she had ever 'raised.' But Sir James died soon after Bunchy's christening, and Oliver, the eldest boy, was now the baronet. Not that he ever got his title, for he was Noll by name and Noll by nature said his brothers; a dull heavy boy. All the Wentworths had nicknames which seemed likely to stick to them through life, even Bunchy, whose name was Blanche, earned hers by right of her round-about little person. But none of the nicknames seemed to fit like that of the Skipper, who was distinctly the ablest to guide the Wentworth crew. It seemed as if he were always in the way when any one wanted a thing done. Not that Skip was what you would call a girly-boy or a prig. Hardly! There was a story the young Wentworths were never tired of bringing up at their gossip-hour, between the lights, when 'Don't-you-remembers,' were passed round, a story which proved the reverse.

Long ago, when Bunchy was in long clothes, there had been a great fight between Skip and Joe Bradley, the bad boy of the place. Joe had tied a homeless cat to the trunk of the Seven Sisters, the group of elms in the middle of the village-green. He and his comrades were engaged in stoning the poor helpless creature to death when the Dene Hurst carriage, with her ladyship and two of her boys in it, drove past.

'Mother,' quietly said Skip, whose keen-sighted blue eyes had detected that the target was a living one, 'I'd like to be set down please, if you don't mind. I've a little matter of business to do.'

'Certainly!' laughed Lady Wentworth, amused at her old-fashioned little son, and the carriage, after dropping Skip, drove home. It did not take long for the Skipper

SKIP MAKES A STAND.

to reach the midst of the group of young ruffians.

'You cowards!' he shouted furiously. 'Stop that!'

'Not for your orders, master!' insolently growled Joe Bradley.

Skip was a little chap and thin as a herring, while Joe was twice his size and fat. But tall and stout as he was, he suddenly found himself tripped, in the first place, and, before he could pick himself up, the cowardly bully had got such a violent pummelling from a pair of sturdy little fists that he could barely see to stagger home.

After this lesson the roughest of the little villagers realized that, though Master Reggie did live at the great house and wore kid gloves on Sunday, he could hold his own or the part of any helpless dumb thing with any of themselves.

As for the Vicar's boarder-pupils, whose studies the Wentworth boys shared, they went fairly wild over the victory, and pretty nearly clapped the breath out of Skip's little thin body.

'Let's have a tuck in to celebrate the occasion!' they proposed. There was an instantaneous rush to the village shop where Willow Wells had just slipped a tray of hot jam-tarts into the window as if on purpose.

'But we haven't a copper among the lot of us!' cried a rueful voice.

'I'll tell you,' suggested another. 'Let's cram the widow that the Vicar says she can put the tarts down in the bill. We're bound to treat Skip!'

'But did the Vicar say so?' asked Skip, whose 'nose was amongst those pressed against the window.

'Did the Vicar!' mimicked Blake, the eldest pupil. 'You ninny, is that likely!'

'But you couldn't say he did, if he didn't!' said Skip simply, with wide-open eyes, before which those of the other boy's wavered.

'Why,' muttered Blake, 'it would only be a whack after all.'

'I call a whack by it's proper name—a lie!' said Skip turning on his heel.

'I wonder he wasn't afraid to say that. Why, Blake could lick him in five minutes!' whispered the pupils, smarting under his open scorn. But somehow Blake did not offer to try, and from that hour the Skipper took his stand as a 'hero in the fight of life.

'But, sonny, never let your championship of others slip into vainglory of self!' was his mother's gentle whisper when she added her meed of praise to the rest. 'Let your battle-cry be "The love of Christ constrains us!"'

Skip, young as he was, understood, and shut away in his heart the boy hid a promise that he would enlist in the ranks of 'Christian soldiers.'

'But what ith Skip born to rule over?' demanded Bunchy, when the joyful sound of the tea-bell made the company assembled round the cheerless empty grate spring to their feet.

'Himself, I hope, for one!' said a voice, and Lady Wentworth, inviting herself to the school-room tea took her place opposite Nurse Tweedy's tea-tray.

CHAPTER II.

'Master Reggie, you're the very person I want!' said Nurse Tweedy, the morning after the dismal long day the Wentworths had spent indoors.

'Well, what is it?' asked Skip, who had dashed upstairs to the nursery quarters. It was a sunny, warm afternoon, and everybody had forgotten there could be such thing as the dreary drip of an out-and-cut pouring day such as yesterday.

'Why,' went on Nurse Tweedy, 'it's time somebody went to Mrs. Steen's for Miss Bunchy. You know she is spending the day at the Home Farm. I can't spare Susan to go, and the downstair servants are all busy for the dinner-party this evening.'

'Oh, I'll go, nurse!' Throwing his cap up in the air and catching it deftly, Skip put it on, then he set off, whistling his loudest.

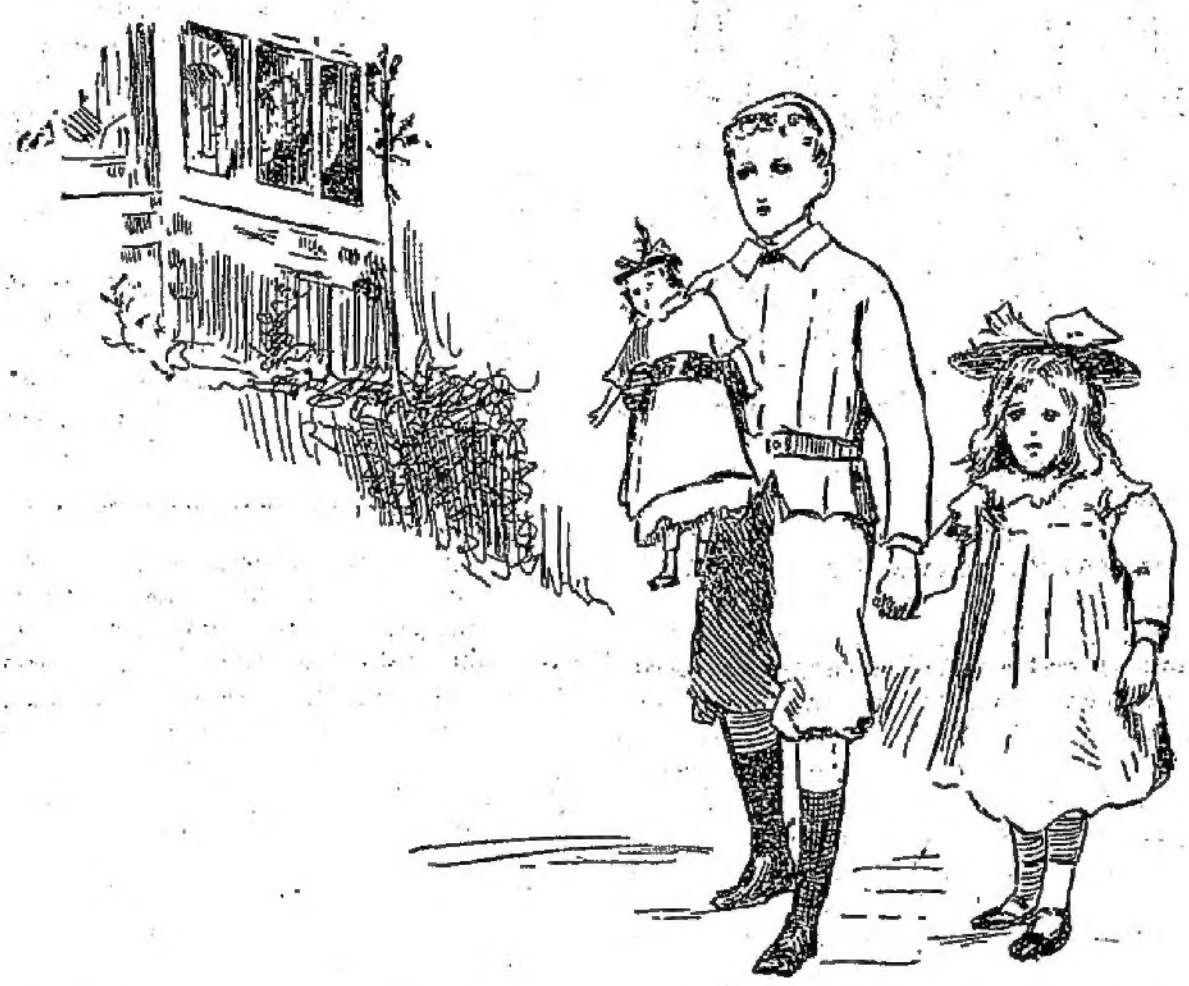
Nurse Tweedy stood watching her favorite scampering down the long avenue of chestnuts. 'He's that cheery and ready to oblige as never was. And the only one of the six I could ask to go and fetch Miss Bunchy.' There was little doubt but Skip was the apple of old Tweedy's eye.

'Oh, I say, here's a rare lark, Blake!' cried one of the vicarage boys, half-an-hour later. 'Come and see the Skipper carrying his doll through the village!'

Blake raised his head from the stiff bit of Latin he was construing, and looked eagerly out of the study-window of the vicarage which stood back from the one straggling street of Dene village. Sure enough, there was Reggie Wentworth coming leisurely along, leading by the hand his roundabout small sister, and adapting his step to her unsteady trudge, while, on his arm, he carried a large wax doll. His face was flushed, for it was a considerable trial, and Skip, when he caught sight of the bobbing heads within the ivy-encircled vicarage window, felt tempted to throw away his horrible burden, with its idiotic, simpering pink-and-whiteness, and run. Only a boy can picture the struggle between shame, dread of ridicule and the brave effort to do the right thing. But the fight was over, and the victory was Skip's. The doll he carried was Bunchy's dearest waxen child, Dulcibelle, which had accompanied its owner to spend the summer day at the Home Farm, and devoutly enough Skip wished he had driven in the donkey-cart to fetch Bunchy, for the wretched doll could have been sat upon.

On the way back, as his little sister and Skip stood looking at the attractions of the village duck-pond, Bunchy had, unfortunately, let Dulcibelle slip into the water. The hapless waxen body was easily rescued, but

she was soaking wet. Now, Skip knew well that if Bunchy, who was terribly subject to bronchitis, trotted all the way home hugging her dripping darling to her, a violent cold would be the certain result. It was not so many months since, in the bitter March weather, that everybody in Dene Hurst had held their breath while Bunchy fought a fierce battle with death, and the solemn London physician came down to shake his head over her. Skip recollected, in a flash, the nights and days when he as well as the rest thought that Bunchy would never again run about the park and the meads—that sorrowful time when mother's voice never was heard though her lips moved ceaselessly as she prayed for her darling's life. The remembrance braced him, and Skip, his head high in the air and his heart beating in loud thumps, passed the vicarage boys with a cool nod. But it was a trial, and he winced all over as audible titters fell on his ear.



SKIP WINCED ALL OVER AS AUDIBLE TITTERS FELL ON HIS EAR.

'Is you tired wif carrying Dulcibelle?' anxiously inquired Bunchy, as she noted Skip's quickened breaths.

'Tired! Of course I'm not!' said Skip shortly. But he squeezed Bunchy's warm, fat hand tighter, and asked her a question or two about the new-born yellow ducklings she had seen that day, laid out on flannel in front of the farm-kitchen fire. This fascinating topic carried the two the rest of the way home, and Skip perhaps never felt such a throb of satisfaction as when he threw Dulcibelle on the old schoolroom sofa to dry. It was altogether a new sort of courage the boy felt he had made acquaintance with that afternoon, and harder, a thousand times, to grapple than that other sort which is shouldered up by excitement and greed of glory.

That night, when Lady Wentworth, later than usual, owing to her dinner-party, went her rounds to bid her flock good-night, she lingered longest besides Skip's bed, and there was a tender talk between the two.

'Yes, dear,' she said, her soft fingers smoothing Skip's short curly hair, 'there's a big difference between physical courage and moral. But I do believe they go hand-in-hand through life, Skip.'

'Just like me and Poll!' squeaked out Castor, one of the twins, whose Christian names were Lionel and Frank. The twins were inseparable by day, and by night their cots were drawn close together like one bedstead.

'Something like, little pitcher!' Lady Wentworth crossed the room to smile at the quaint mutual 'good-nights' of the twins.

Every night Castor and Poll took leave of each other until the morrow in these words:

'Good-night! God bless you! Hope you'll be better in the morning!'

Nobody could persuade the little men to alter this form of 'good-night,' which they must have picked up from their elders' lips at some time.

They were all bright, quick-witted boys the Wentworths, save, perhaps, Noll, the eldest. The village folk of Dene were given to say that little Sir Oliver was a mistake.

'He hadn't ought to be anywheres but the tail-end of the fam'ly. He's that dull, and won't make no sart o' master for Dene Hurst come he be growed up.'

The truth was that Skip having a handsome face, frank manners, and a figure active as a cat's, was too popular for quiet, sensitive Noll to have justice done him.

'But bide a wee!' said the good old Vicar, who taught all the Westworths along with his boarders. 'It isn't always the brightest mornings that make the sunniest noontides; it's sometimes the reverse. We musn't be in a hurry to judge little Sir Oliver. He hasn't been given that big head for nothing. If he ever makes a show in the world, why he will find his work ready on the shady side of life. We can't all walk on the sunny side; there wouldn't be elbow-room.'

All the same the Vicar's own eyes never failed to soften when they rested on Skip, and he secretly told himself: 'The boy is David over again, "ruddy and of a cheerful countenance." I pray he may grow up with David's bravery and David's fervent love for God!'

CHAPTER III.

'Now, my dears, are you all ready? Come, come, sober down and be proper behaved!'

It was Sunday morning, and Nurse Tweedy stood like a clucking hen endeavoring to gather her brood of little Wentworths together to set out for the morning service at the ivy-covered church of Dene village. It was an old joke at Dene Hurst that Tweedy counted the children every Sunday morning on the lawn before starting to church, in order to see if any of them had been lost during the week. So, with the customary amount of pinching, hustling, and wild searchings for stray gloves, there was the usual headlong scamper down stairs for the inspection-parade.

'Here we are!' shouted Skip, and Tweedy went solemnly down the broadly smiling ranks, examining carefully with her keen eyes every button, and every pocket that looked suspiciously fat.

'Does I look very nice?' innocently inquired Bunchy, who, being the only lady of the party, felt some natural anxiety on the point.

'Beautiful, deary!' said Tweedy admiringly, and Bunchy, beaming around, wondered why all the boys nudged each other and giggled so hilariously.

'Right about face—quick march!' Nurse gravely gave the word of command, and the company, wheeling round as one man, set forth sedately down the long, chestnut avenue, and through the village street. Bringing up the rear came Tweedy, in her Sunday black silk gown unfolded from its week's rest, and by her side the nursery-maid, Susan, carrying the colors of the little regiment in her own apple-red cheeks.

A proper sight they be!' pronounced the old villagers as the procession filed demurely into the churchyard. But Tweedy became uneasily aware that something was going on in the front ranks of the company by the nudging and pushing she could see over the heads of the rear ranks. Indeed, her charges were not the only ones excited by something laughable. On every face of the groups that were waiting about until the last notes of the bell should die away before they entered the church, was a wide grin. Turning her head, Tweedy saw the cause in a strange figure coming up the broad path, with mincing step and affected mien. It was a curiously small old lady, with a short, tight, yellow gown edged with frills; a deep lace tippet; and a huge, black velvet bonnet, in which sat an entire bird-of-Paradise, plumes and all. In one hand this eccentric personage carried a colored silk bag; in the other she gently waved to and fro a large, green fan. Everybody knew her to be queer little Miss Ffrench from Jasmine Cottage, and the Dene villagers were given to declare that the lady was pretty nigh a hundred years old. True enough Miss Ffrench's life-clock had already struck ninety-one; she was indeed quite venerable enough to have entered her second childhood, as anyone could see. Miss Ffrench, however, was no stranger; people were accustomed to her outlandish appearance. She was one of the features of Dene, much as were the Seven-Sisters, the group of elms in the middle of the green. But on this summer morning their laughter was raised by the sight of three of the vicarage boys, in single file, silently mincing on tip-toe behind her, each waving violently an imaginary fan.

'It be terrible funny!' giggled the onlookers; and Bunchy, with a loudly admiring chuckle, pointed her small finger at the spectacle.

The ridiculous procession was nearing the church porch, and louder titters were becoming audible from the flaming-faced lads and lasses, when there was a rushing sound through the waiting groups; Bunchy was almost capsized, and open-mouthed Noll reeled before a sharp shove from behind. The next thing to happen took everyone's breath away. Skip, his fair face white and stern, his thin little body stiffened to an iron straightness, marched up to the ancient dame and offered her his arm, which she at once accepted with a simpering smile and a deep curtesy. The poor lady evidently took the attention for a simple piece of politeness.

'Thank you, young sir!' she said in a high-

pitched, trembling voice. 'The days of chivalry, it seems, have not altogether fled.'

Without an answering word, Skip conducted her through the porch and up the middle aisle to her own little pew just under the pulpit. A fire of surprised stares followed the pair. Lady Wentworth lifted her head from her prayer-book, and her soft eyes grew wide in astonishment. But an understanding look swiftly effaced the surprise when Skip turned to cross the aisle to the Dene Hurst pew. There was a spot of

SKIP SHOWS THAT THE DAYS OF CHIVALRY HAVE NOT ALTOGETHER GONE BY.

red on each of his cheeks, for every eye in the church was on him, but the rest of his face was white to the lips and stern-set, and his mother read plainly that her boy had been through a fiery trial.

'My little "Christian soldier!"' she murmured under her breath as she slipped her hand into Skip's when he rose from his knees at her side.

As for the vicarage boys, the three who had sought to draw down ridicule upon the head of old age, they were covered with a sudden cloud of unutterable confusion and shame. All in a moment the fine joke they fancied would be the admiration of everybody shrivelled up into a cruel, paltry piece of fooling. Added to the shame was the certain knowledge that when the Vicar came to hear of such disgraceful proceedings on Sunday and in the very churchyard, a heavy punishment awaited them. Not daring to venture any further into the church, the three slipped into the free seat, where Joe Bradley, the bad boy of Dene, when he did come to any service, sat and hacked the book-board with his rusty pocket-knife. There crouched the trio, feeling abjectly that they were fit company for Joe, and quaking over the prospect of the morrow's lively interview with the furious Vicar. To add further to their misery and discomfort, they had a full view of Skip's round, fair head, reaching to his mother's elbow. They had thought it a fine thing indeed to raise a laugh at the expense of a helpless old lady, but they knew now, each of them, that it was a still finer thing to have braved ridicule instead of raising it. When the end of the service came the hymn given out was, strangely enough, 'Onward, Christian soldiers,' and the heads of the three sank lower. No soldiers did they feel; instead, they were merely contemptible deserters.

It was still worse when the congregation poured out into the sunlit air. Everybody crowded up to shake hands with Skip, or to take their hats off to him, while the three pupils made haste to slip out into the lane, and steal back to the vicarage, feeling sure that the Vicar would bring home with him the story of their misdoing. Somebody would be safe to tell him. And then—well, they knew of old what a caning from him felt like, and to-morrow they would assuredly know again.

It all came to pass as they expected. After each of the boys had got through a separate interview with the Vicar, in the study, they were dispatched to call upon Miss Ffrench, and beg her pardon. The poor lady—whether she was completely mystified or whether she knew the best way to 'heap coals of fire on her enemies' heads,' it would be difficult to say; but she insisted on her guests partaking of ample slices of the rich plum cake she hastily brought out of a carved, black oak cabinet, more ancient than herself. As they sat choking over the cake the three shame-stricken boys felt Miss Ffrench's hospitality to be the worst part of their punishment.

CHAPTER IV.

Years have come and gone since Skip joined the ranks of Christian soldiers. All through them the brave boy never swerved from the right in small things as well as in great, though he found the service of the Master no easy-going frivolling, but hard, and often unpalatable work. And, by-and-by, when Skip donned the British uniform, to set forth and serve his Queen and his country, he carried with him his own Articles of War, in the shape of the little Bible his mother had given him long ago. Cant was an unlearned language to Skip, and as a man, there was no more of the prig about him than there had been in the courageous urchin who would not allow cruelty to animals; who braved the Vicarage boys' jeers to spare his delicate sister a dangerous chill; who rescued a helpless old lady from a position of public ridicule.

Under the burning sun of India, the new recruit was plunged into a strange existence, full of privations and toil. It was altogether different from his boyish dreams of the glories of a military life. Skip's eyes were abruptly opened to the true meaning of cruel war; he was aghast at its inhumanity. And, instead of gay marchings to stirring music, with flags flying and hearts beating high over the chances of their owners distinguishing themselves, there were the grim realities of deadly perils in the jungle from beasts of prey, or from sudden fever-spells. Dusty, begrimed, and spent, Skip, though brave as a lion, asked himself often, during the weary march up-country, if he had not made a mistake in his choice of a profession.

Before the troops reached their destination, however, these doubts born of fatigue and hunger, perhaps, had vanished. News met the advancing detachment of some further terrible skirmishes in the district on which they were marching. One of the hill tribes had descended on a peaceful community, and savagely fired an entire village. Orders were given to hasten the pursuit and punishment of the cruel marauders. This was a sort of thing Skip comprehended. To defend the weak from the strong befitted the soldier of Christ as well as the wearer of the Queen's uniform. But the hill-men were crafty, and skilfully dodged the British, who grew worn-out and spent. One after another, men fell out by the way, struck down with sickness. A hospital tent was put up, and Skip, of all others, told off to remain behind in charge, as the enemy were lurking in the jungle. Watch over a few fever patients! Sit with folded hands, while his comrades marched away to win promotion and fame! The young officer was faint with disappointment. But the old Skip nature rose up, and he threw himself loyally into his task, repeating a certain line his mother loved:

'They also serve who only stand and wait.'

So Skip tended the sick with his own hands, for he was nothing, if not all things.

'He's as good as the doctor hisself!' declared the grateful patients. The surgeon had gone on with the force where he would be most needed in the event of a skirmish.

The enforced halt was, however, a severe trial, making the intense heat, the want of sufficient provisions and of water seem harder to bear.

One starless night Skip, heavy with fatigue, was sleeping like a log when one of his troopers shook him violently.

'What is it, man?' drowsily demanded Skip.

'Tent's a-foire, sor!'

It was true. In the silent darkness, the enemy, who were hovering all over the district, had fired the tent containing the sick. In such a tindery climate the fire was the work of a short time. Rushing forward, Skip plunged into the blazing mass.

'Come back, sir,' shouted his men, frantically. "Tis madness to try it.' But Skip was in and out again, bearing a senseless form in his arms. Again and again, he plunged back, to return out of the flames leading or carrying one after another of the five patients, who were stupefied by the smoke. By that time the fire was over, a tent does not take so long as a house to burn up. Staggering forward, Skip fell into the jungle-grass terribly burned himself.

The rest was a black dream, out of which Skip awoke to find himself in a cool, clean, white bed, with mosquito-curtains drawn round it, and a motherly old ayah sitting watching him. He was in his colonel's own house, at a well-known up-country station. And no wonder, seeing he had been carried unconscious in a litter for days and nights thither, the story of his bravery travelling ahead of him.

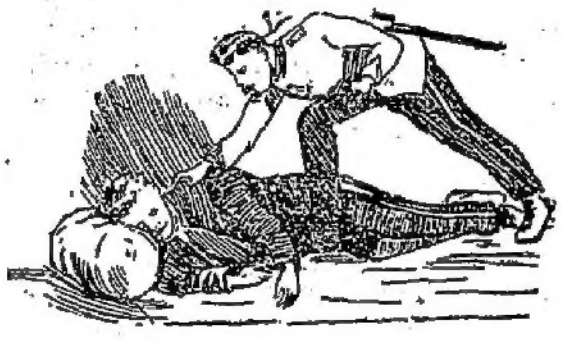
Nothing was too good for such a hero; Skip's name was in all men's mouths, and many a heart ached when the doctors failed to save his cruelly burned left arm.

* * * * * * *

The skirmishes in India are quelled, the

war over, and though it has emptied some places that can never be filled on this side of Paradise, still there is joy in English homes and hearts over the peace that has brooded down once more. The troops who had been ordered hastily to the rescue have returned again. On a certain day they are gathered together amid welcoming crowds, while their Queen herself decorates the best and bravest of them with the famous Victoria Cross. One after another they stand before Her Majesty to receive it. Lastly, there strides up a tall, stalwart young officer, his blue eyes loking out, clear and stedfast, from his bronzed face. He is a conspicuous soldier, and is well known by name to the great concourse of people around for a heroic act of bravery. But royal eyes look pitifully at the empty coat-sleeve hanging by his left side; pitifully, for our Queen, they say, feels her soldiers' wounds in her own heart. It is Skip himself, and standing near is a proud and happy group, through each of whom runs a thrill, hot and then cold, as he bends low that his sovereign's hands may reach his breast. The Dene Hurst boys and girls have grown to man and womanhood, and in their midst stands the gentle, soft-eyed mother who strove her best to bring them up in the 'fear and admonition of the Lord.' There is Sir Oliver, the chief of the clan, a fine, tall man, whose body has managed to grow up to match his big head. No longer the stupid Noll of old, the young baronet is a member of Parliament no less. Pressing close upon him are two eager twin faces belonging to Castor and Poll, now Oxford men. the other boys likewise have shot up, and in the dainty young lady between them we recognize Bunchy herself. It was only last week that Miss Wentworth went to Court to make her curtsey at the Queen's drawing-room, in feathers, and satin-train. Now her shy eyes reverently watch the sovereign decorating the brave brother whose name Bunchy is so proud to bear. But, perhaps, proudest and gladdest of all is the bent, wrinkled woman peering from behind her ladyship, the old nurse whom the Wentworths still call 'Nurse Twesdy.'

'My dears,' she quavers, when the great ceremony is over, 'our Master Reggie earned his Victoria Cross over and over again, when he was but a little boy; thank God I've been spared to see him wear it!'—M. B. Manwell.



Good Humored People.

Those who are always good-humored are very useful persons in this world, by diffusing a generous cheerfulness among all who approach them. Habitual vivacity has the recommendation of not only its own pleasurable feelings, but it has a sanitary benefit, for it keeps the blood in proper circulation, quickens the understanding, and even helps digestion. Indeed, it conduces to long life, while, on the other hand, the habit of yielding to and fostering sadness of heart embitters and shortens the days of the young. It is well said by Solomon that 'a merry heart doeth good like a medicine; but a broken spirit drieth the bones.'

The Story of the Purple Codex.

(By Professor A. L. Long, D.D., Vice-President of Robert College, Constantinople, in 'Sunday-School Times.')

(Continued from last week.)

Tradition has occupied itself only with the history of the ancient relic, and so fails to gratify our curiosity concerning the fate of the poor widow and her goat after their mysterious supply of food was thus suddenly cut off. It is to be hoped that for the remainder of her days she was tenderly cared for as one of the 'widows indeed' of the church thus enriched by her misfortune.

Years rolled by. Generation after generation came and passed on to 'the land of no return,' and the old volume still remained in the sacred coffer of the humble village church. No prying archaeologist had cast his covetous eye upon it, or reported its existence and whereabouts to the scientific world. At length the bishop of the diocese happens to visit the village, and learns incidentally of the existence of the venerable relic. He spends some time in examining it privately, and becomes evidently interested in it. He soon makes another visit, and spends the night in the house of one of the chief men of the village. In the evening he calls the priest, and orders him to bring to him the old Gospel, in order that he may use it in his private devotions. The book is brought and delivered into his hands. His reverence receives during the night some urgent message, rendering it necessary for him to start upon his journey very early in the morning. In the hurry of packing, the old volume is accidentally put into the pannier, and loaded upon the mule and carried off. The priest discovers, to his horror, that the 'talisman' of his church is gone. He hastily summons a half-dozen stalwart young fellows, armed with stout cudgels, and sends them in swift pursuit. They are lucky enough to intercept the episcopal caravan in a mountain pass, and, without great difficulty, they succeed in 'persuading' the bishop to surrender the coveted prize.

This incident, together with the evidences of many leaves having been previously abstracted from the volume, aroused the leading men of the village to the necessity of greater caution in guarding their treasure. It was consequently kept with much greater strictness than before. At length two of the 'epitropes,' or trustees, who had travelled as far as Stamboul, and seen something of the world, were incited with the desire of seeing something done for the education of the youth of the village, and the idea struck them that perhaps this old volume might be put to a practical use. In short, they ventured to think of selling it. They had to proceed, however, very cautiously, lest their ignorant townsmen should be aroused against their project, and might possibly use with them the same wooden arguments which they had used so effectively with the bishop. They secretly took out a sample leaf from the book, and, folding it twice, put it into an envelope, and sent it to one of their townsmen then in the capital on business.

It was in the summer of 1892 when this young man appeared before me and mysteriously handed me the envelope containing the vellum leaf. I saw a leaf of the thinnest kind of vellum almost like 'gold-beaters' skin,' of a dark reddish-purple color, the letters square, upright uncials, and in silver while the sacred names of God, Christ, etc., abbreviated as usual, were in gold. I glanced hastily over both sides of the leaf; my hand trembled with excitement. I folded up the precious document, replaced it in the envelope, and gravely put it in my pocket, saying to the young man, 'You see that I am busy just now. Come to me at my house the day after to-morrow at noon, and we will then talk about this.' The young man, whom I had never seen before, looked somewhat hesitant. I quietly said, 'You know, of course, who I am and you are not unwilling to trust me.' 'All right' said he, and politely took his leave. For two hours I was busied with pressing duties, so that I could not even glance at the precious leaf. Only the expert can understand how that envelope seemed to burn in my pocket. The thought of having actually in my pocket a sample leaf of a six-century manuscript of the Gospels was constantly uppermost in my mind.

At length my duties were ended, and I hurried home and seated myself at my table for the critical examination of the fragment. The size of the folio was thirty-two by twenty-six centimeters, text twenty-two by ten centimeters; two columns of sixteen lines each, space between the lines equal to height of the letters, or six millimeters. The added letters at the end of the line were small uncials of the same type as the other letters. There were no capital letters, but the initials were simply set out one space to the left.

I copied first with pen and afterwards photographed the two pages. The photograph, owing to the color and to the crumpled state of the original, was not quite satisfactory, but it sufficed to show the general character of the letters. The text contained in the two pages was Luke xviii., 14. I made a note of the itacisms and the variants upon these two pages, and noted carefully the paleographic characteristics of the writing. I then consulted what authorities were at hand, and the conviction was forced upon my mind that the volume represented by this sample leaf could be no other than the original volume out of which have been stolen, and that many years ago, those four leaves in the British Museum, those two leaves in the Vienna Library, and those six in the Vatican, which with thirty-three more found in Patmos and reported by Sakellion, in all forty-five leaves, were catalogued as one volume by Tischendorf under the designation Codex N Purpureus, and dating from the latter part of the sixth century. This opinion I expressed in a confidential note written that same evening to my friend Professor Gregory of Leipsic.

The appointed time arrived, and the young man made his appearance. He told me that he was not authorized to sell, but that he had been sent to me for my opinion of the book, and my estimate of its value; in short, to ask how much I was willing to give for it. I realized at once the difficulty of the situation, and the necessity of secrecy in negotiation. My great desire being to secure for America this volume, I did not dare to announce the discovery. I thought it quite possible also that others were in possession of the same secret. I saw that the expectations of the holders of the treasure were very high, and, if a purchase were effected, it would only be with a good round sum. To raise the sum required without publicity was a difficult problem. In the meantime, I labored with the hope of getting the parties to name a definite price for the volume, and thus give me the refusal for its purchase. They were too wary to be caught.

The story of the bargaining is too long to be here given. One after another of my offers had been rejected, and I had paused to consider the question of ways and means. I unexpectedly received from Bishop Whittaker, who had been earnestly requested by my friend, Professor Hilprecht, to obtain the precious codex for the library of the Episcopal Seminary of Philadelphia, a check for six hundred pounds sterling, and a request that I secure the manuscript at once. Thus

materially reinforced, I resumed bargaining with renewed hope. At length there came a time when the whole sum had been offered and refused, and my heart sank within me. My good friend Mr. J. S. Kennedy, of New York, president of the board of trustees of Robert College, happened to be in Constantinople on a visit at the time, and I confided to him the story of the negotiations going on. He generously at once authorized me to go on, and, in fact, to spare no expense in securing the prize for America. It is but right for me to say that he added that he did not wish to take advantage of anyone else, but, if successful, he would willingly give the Philadelphia friends the option of the purchase.

In the meantime, cholera quarantine and then the political disturbances cut off communication, and prevented my visiting the village in person. The bargaining, however, went on, and at length my offer of one thousand pounds was verbally accepted, and I was expecting each day a telegram directing the payment of the money. I had made the necessary arrangements with the bank to receive and bring safely to me the book. Suddenly the news came that a Russian archaelogist, travelling in that region, had heard of the old book, and turned aside to have a look at it. My spirits sank below zero, for I knew who the parties were, and what they were after. Then came the word that a Russian consul had arrived, bearing an order from the Greek patriarch of Constantinople to deliver the volume for transmission to St. Petersburgh, as it had been purchased by his Imperial Majesty the Tsar. The price was stated to be one thousand pounds and two hundred pounds' worth of vestments, etc., for the church.

When the codex arrived in Constantinople, Professor Uspensky, director of the Russian Archaeological Institute, with great friendliness invited me to inspect the volume. The feelings with which I took in my hands the venerable volume of which until that time I had seen only a single crumpled leaf, and upon the paleographic evidence of that single leaf had offered so large a sum, and for three years had been working with the hope of securing it for some library in my own land, I will not attempt here to describe. I will only add that I had the very great satisfaction of sitting down with the professor, and incontestably demonstrating, to his great satisfaction also, the correctness of my opinion concerning the volume—that is, that this old volume, now of one hundred and eighty-four folios of thin purple vellum, represents the source of the forty-five leaves which, scattered in four different places, are known as Codex N Purpureus, a manuscript of the sixth century, and by many critics counted as No. 4 in the order of critical importance. It is not necessary here to detail the evidence upon which this demonstration rested. I will only say that it was, first, the entire absence of all texts known to be in those fragments; and, second, several cases of correspondence where a verse or even a word is divided, and part is found in this volume, and the other part is found on one of those forty-five leaves (see my article in 'The Independent,' April 23, 1896, and note in April 30).

When I remarked that, if the villagers had given me the chance to make a counter bid, they would have profited to the extent of several hundred pounds, since I would have gone up to fifteen hundred, the Professor smilingly replied; 'His Majesty would have gone up to two thousand.' So ends the story which I was asked to write for this paper,—namely, my story of the Purple Codex.

The Mite Box Nest.

It was so long ago, that it seems as if 'when I was young,' were the way to begin, for I am not so old yet, but that twenty years ago seems a long time to me. But at that time in one of the southern counties of Ohio there was manifested the true missionary spirit. An earnest hearted woman, with a husband and large family of children, worked hard on a farm to have apples and potatoes sufficient to supply their needs until the spring vegetables should come. Some of the daughters had grown to young womanhood, and were earnest, faithful Christians like their mother.

Though so poor, they were readers. The eldest saw in her church paper accounts of a new society which had been started among the Methodist women. She read of the plans for work and for organization; but there were no other women around her interested enough to form an auxiliary, and she could learn of none near enough to which she could send her name. But she must help that society—she must do something.

What could she do to help that work? Then she read of 'mite boxes.' Yes, she could have a box; so when the holiday time came, and she went home for her busy days of sewing, she spoke to her mother about a family 'mite box.' It was in the days of paper collars. A little round paper collar box was soon found, the cover fastened on, and a slit cut in the top; a string was passed through the side, and then the box was fastened to the wall in the sitting-room. On this was written 'Mite box for the W. F. M. S.'

Then she said to her mother, 'I will mark some of God's blessings to me by sending offerings to go in this box with those of the rest of the family. At the close of the year please open it, and send the money to the nearest society.' The mother gladly accepted the trust, and husband, daughters, all were urged to make sacrifices, and drop pennies, dimes, etc., into the box when they could, as thankofferings for special blessings. They promised as soon as the box was full the contents should be counted and sent off.

Some time after it was noticed that the box began to look heavy, then that the bottom was beginning to break away from the side. Cord was wrapped around it from back to front. It grew heavier and more cord was wrapped round and round, from side to side. Still the weight increased, and the strain on the box grew greater. Again cord was tied around from back to front, then over the nail in the wall, then round the box again, and so it was braced and wrapped, and tied, till I don't know whether there was more box or cord. A mother bird, repairing the ravages of time in the nest which sheltered her birdlings, could not have watched more anxiously, nor cared for them more tenderly, than did this mother in Israel watch and care for her treasure, the precious box which held a little help for the perishing sisters so far away.

Month after month the pennies dropped, and the strings were wound. Sometimes it seemed that the box would give way, but in spite of all, it held, and finally the mother said the box was full. With great interest and curiosity, it was tenderly taken down. Moist eyes watched the counting of the sacred pennies and silver, for each piece meant some sacrifice, or some special reason for thanksgiving. When it was announced that over twelve dollars had been sheltered in this oddly woven missionary bird's nest, there was great joy over their first collection. Where could it be sent? There was no society near, and this sacred money had to be sent out of the state to find a channel by which to reach the waiting ones who knew not Christ.

But its work was not all done over the seas, for more than once has this story of a woman's faithfulness and earnestness deepened the feeling of responsibility in other hearts. And if a broader circle now read of the box and cords, we pray that the interest awakened may bind other hearts to those 'who sit in darkness, with a three-fold cord of love.'—'Presbyterian Witness.'

Went Barefoot.

Nearly twenty years ago a poor minister in a village parish tried to persuade a family of the neighborhood, so vagrant in their habits that they almost deserved to be called a family of tramps, to settle down, live decently, and attend church.

'At least,' he said to the mother, 'let the boys come to our Sunday-school.'

'They have no clothes fit to wear,' she said.

'I will find clothes for them,' he answered.

The clothes were provided with much difficulty and self-denial by the clergyman.

'They shan't go barefoot,' said the mother. 'I won't have my boys laughed at.'

The shoes could not be bought. The minister's pockets were empty. He thought a moment.

'My own boys will go barefoot,' he said; 'then yours will not be laughed at.'

'What do you say, Jack, Tom?' he said, a few hours later at the supper-table. 'Will you go barefoot to bring these lads to school?'

Jack and Tom, with somewhat wry faces, laughed, and finally consented.

The other boys went to Sunday-school for a few months, and then the entire family disappeared, and soon passed out of the minister's mind.

Last summer the good pastor, now almost an old man, preached in a remote country village, and after service was over, was greeted by a young man, the pastor of a small church near by. He was one of the vagabond boys.

'All that I am I owe to that kindly thought of yours about the shoes,' he said. 'It was the first act of self-sacrificing kindness that ever had come into my wretched life. It turned me to a new path of thought and action, and the good influence of the Sunday-school did the rest. Your boys probably thought it was a little thing to go barefoot for a few Sundays. But it saved a human soul.'—'Youth's Companion.'

The House Of Never.

The house of Never is built, they say,
Just over the hills of the By-and-By;
Its gates are reached by a devious way,
Hidden from all but an angel's eye.
It winds about, and in and out,
The hills and dales to sever;
Once over the hills of the By-and-By
And you're lost in the house of Never.

The house of Never is filled with waits,
With just-in-a-minutes and pretty-soons;
The noise of their wings as they beat the gates
Comes back to earth in the afternoons,
When shadows fly across the sky,
And rushes rude endeavour
To question the hills of the By-and-By
As they ask for the house of Never.

The house of Never was built with tears;
And lost in the hills of the By-and-By
Are a million hopes and a million fears—
A baby's smiles and a woman's cry.
The winding way seems bright to-day,
Then darkness falls for ever,
For over the hills of the By-and-By
Sorrow waits in the house of Never.

—'Children's Treasury.'

[For the 'Messenger.'

The Secret Drawer; or Ethel's Disobedience.

By Gladys Wright (aged 13).

Ethel was living with her grandmother in New Hampshire. The house in which she lived was large and old-fashioned, with many nooks and corners to explore. At the very top of the house was an old garret where boxes and packing cases were stored.

Now, Ethel was forbidden to go to the garret, for her grandmother was afraid she would get hurt among so many heavy things. Ethel might have been very happy, but, being a very curious little girl, she would sit at the bottom of the garret stairs, and wonder what could be in the garret that she could not see. She worried about it all day, and dreamed about it at night, until at last she was so restless she could not settle down to anything.

Her grandmother, noticing how pale she was getting, asked her if she was sick, but she always answered 'No.' At last she determined to just have a 'peep into the garret.'

One day her grandmother said to her, 'Ethel, dear, I am going out to see a friend, and you must be a good girl till I come home, and if you want anything, you may ask Mary (their old housemaid) for it.'

When first her grandmother went out, Ethel sat down to sew, but after a while she got tired of this, and took out a book to read. But even the interesting story failed to keep her attention.

By-and-by she was going downstairs, when she passed the garret door, and the temptation was too great for her to pass by. So after making sure that she was unseen, she opened the door very quietly, and stole upstairs to the garret; she opened the heavy iron door and went in.

At first all was dark, and she was about to run away, when she spied a chest in the corner, and her curiosity led her forward. As her eyes became accustomed to the gloom, she could see quite plainly. Opening the lid of the iron chest, she peeped in, and to her delight saw numbers of little drawers inside. She opened one after the other, until she came to the last one, which was somewhat larger than the others. When she opened this one there were two little ones inside of it. In one of these lay a tiny gold key.

'Now,' thought Ethel, 'this must belong to something;' so taking it out, she looked all round the drawers, but could find nothing. When she was about to give up the search, she accidentally touched a spring, and to her surprise a little drawer flew open. In it lay a box lined with pink silk, and in the middle was a little gold ring set with two rubies and a pearl.

'Oh!' cried Ethel, 'the darling, just what I want.' Slipping it on her finger, she found it was too large. But tied to it was a card with these words on it: 'For my little daughter on her tenth birthday.' Ethel slipped it back into the box, put it in the drawer and closed the chest.

It was Ethel's father who had written that; she was so young when he died that she could scarcely remember him. But her grandmother had told her a great deal about him.

Ethel moved slowly over to the door, but, to her surprise, she could not open it. She became terribly

A MORNING HYMN.

The morning bright with rosy light,
Hath waked me from my sleep;
Father, I own Thy love alone
Thy little one doth keep.

All through the day I humbly pray,
Be Thou my Guard and Guide;
My sins forgive and let me live,
Blest Jesus, by Thy side.

Oh, make Thy rest within my breast,
Great Spirit of all grace.
Make me like Thee, then shall I be
Prepared to see Thy face.

—'Boys' and Girls' Companion.'

frightened at this. She called Mary over and over again, but got no answer. The truth was, Mary was afraid to go up to the garret. But when grandmother came home, hearing the cries, she followed the sound till she came to the garret door; then she guessed what had happened.

Going upstairs, she opened the door from the outside, and found Ethel sobbing on the floor. Running to her grandmother, she flung her arms round her neck, and promised she would not be disobedient any more.

On her next birthday she got the ring, and from that time she learnt to be more obedient to everyone. When her grandfather heard the story, he said he was sure his little grand-daughter would be more careful another time in doing what was right.

The Little Pet Lammie.

'What makes them pass the box two times in the meeting?' asked Bessy when she got home from church one morning. It was Sailors' Sunday, and the good minister had preached a sermon about 'those that go down to the sea in ships.'

'The first one was for running expenses,' said mamma. 'Then after that they passed the box again to get some money for the poor sailors.'

'What's "running expenses"?' asked Bessy, with her forehead all in a pucker.

'Oh, to keep the church going—pay the coal bills and the gas bills, and pay the organist and the minister. In some churches they let people pay for sitting in the pews, and get their money that way, but our seats are free, and so we pass the boxes.'

'The church doesn't run a bit! It just stays right there!' said Bessy, stoutly.

Papa gave a little laugh behind his paper, and even mamma smiled as she made haste to answer. 'Well, it seems to. But its business is to "go;" Jesus said so. I can show you the orders in the Bible.'

'Oh, do please show me the orders!' begged Bessy.

So mamma took down the Bible and turned to that verse in Mark which is your Golden Text for to-day.

'There it is. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Now, those words are for all Christ's disciples.'

'For me, mamma?'

'Yes, darling,' said mamma. 'For everyone. But of course not every single one can go. You have to stay here and grow and go to school and help take care of baby, and I have to stay and keep the house and make your clothes and be the mother. There are a great many people just like us, whom God wants to stay at home for a while and do the home work. But all the time there are the orders. Now, how are they going to mind them?'

'They might send somebody to go for them,' said Bessy, after a while.

'That is just what they have to do,' said mamma. 'That is what the contribution boxes are for. It takes money. To-day we sent preachers to the sailors. Books and lodging houses and all sorts of good helps will come out of that money. We shall "go" a long way by our gifts this morning. Sailors go everywhere.'

'I should call that the "running expenses,"' laughed Bessy. 'Mamma, I want to give something. I've got something all my own! Papa said he would give me money for it!'

'What is it, darling?'

'My little pet lammie. Course I love it, but I want to 'bey the orders.'—'Little Pilgrim.'

The Taper and the Lighthouse.

Did you ever think you could not be of much use in the world? Read this little story about the taper that helped to keep great ships safe on the ocean.

One night a man took a little taper out of a drawer and lighted it, and began to ascend a long, winding stair.

'Where are you going?' said the taper.

'Away up high,' said the man, 'higher than the top of the house where we sleep.'

'And what are you going to do there?' said the little taper.

'I am going to show the ships out at sea where the harbor is,' said the man. 'For we stand here at the entrance to a harbor, and some ship far out on the stormy sea may be looking out for our light even now.'

'Alas! no ship could ever see my light,' said the taper, 'it is so very small.'

'If your light is small,' said the man, 'keep it burning bright and leave the rest to me.'

Well, when the man got up to the top of the lighthouse—for this was a lighthouse they were in—he took the little taper, and with it he lighted the great lamps that stood ready there with their polished reflectors behind them. And soon they were burning steady and clear, throwing a great, strong beam of light across the sea.

By this time the lighthouse man had blown out the little taper and laid it aside. But it had done its work. Though its own light had been so small, it had been the means of kindling the great lights in the top of the lighthouse, and these were now shining over the sea, so that ships, far out, knew by them where they were, and were guided safely into the harbor.—'Golden Rule.'

Why the Apple Tree Broke.

The late Dr. Spencer said that when he was a lad his father gave him a little tree that had just been grafted. One day, in his father's absence, he let the colt in the garden, and the colt broke off the graft. It was mended, however, on the following day, and continued to grow finely.

Years passed, and young Spencer became a man and a minister. Some time after he became a pastor he made a visit to the old homestead where he had spent his boyhood. His sapling had become a large tree and loaded with apples. During the night after his arrival at the homestead there was a violent thunder shower; the wind blew fearfully.

He rose early in the morning, and on going out found his tree lying prostrate upon the ground. The wind had twisted it off just where the colt had broken it when it was a sapling. Probably the storm would not have broken it at all if it had not been broken when it was small.

Little one, don't break your word! You may mend it by saying, 'I told a lie, but I am very, very sorry!' Yet the truth branch of you will always be a little weak. Sometime, when you are very much tempted, it may give way where it was broken before.—'Mayflower.'

Saturday Night.

How pleasant is Saturday night
  When I've tried all the week to be good,
Not spoken a word that was bad,
  And obliged every one that I could.

To-morrow the holy day comes,
  Which our merciful Father has given,
That we may rest from our work,
  And prepare for the joys of his heaven.

—'Young Reader.'

LESSON IV.—APRIL 23.

Jesus the Way, and the Truth and the Life.

John xiv., 1-14. Memory verses, 2-6. Study also Acts iv., 8-12.

Golden Text.

'Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life.'—John xiv., 6.

Home Readings.

M. John xiv., 1-14.—Jesus the way, the truth and the life.
T. John xvii., 1-10.—The life.
W. John xvii., 11-19.—The truth.
T. John xvii., 20-26.—The way.
F. Eph. ii., 13-22—Way to the Father.
S. Acts iv., 1-12.—The only way.
S. Heb. x., 11-22.—The living way.

Lesson Story.

After our Lord had washed the disciples's feet, they ate the Passover lamb together, and Jesus sorrowfully told his disciples that one of them should betray him. Then dipping some bread in the dish he gave it to Judas, a sign of the deepest love. But Judas had already allowed the devil to fill his heart with hatred to Christ, so he got up and went out to plot with the high priests to take Jesus. After he was gone, the disciples were much troubled by the thought of their Master leaving them and of their uncertain future. Our Lord had also warned Peter of his denial. At this moment of gloom Jesus began to comfort and strengthen his disciples with those wonderful words of promise and peace: 'Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me.' And in words of matchless beauty he explained to them that in his Father's house were many abiding places, or homes, which he must go to prepare for them. But our Lord told his disciples that he was not going away forever, that he would return and take them to be forever with himself. 'And whither I go, ye know the way.'

But Thomas, slow to comprehend the deep spiritual meaning of Christ's statement, said that they knew not where their Master was going, and how could they know the way? Jesus answered, 'I am the way.' As he was going to his Father, so must they go, and only through him and with him could they go to God.

'No man cometh unto the Father, but by me,' and no one can stand between us and the Saviour who alone can take us to God.

'Lord, show us the Father,' pleaded Philip. But Jesus told them tenderly, yet half sadly, that he was the revelation of God to man, and that since they had seen him they had seen God, and if they had not known God it was because they did not really know Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son.

All his mighty miracles had been wrought simply by his indwelling with God, he was 'one with the Father.' And even greater works should be done after his departure by those who abode in him and were filled with his power.

'And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye ask anything in my name I will do it.'

Suggestions.

Let not your heart be troubled, the storms and winds may beat upon the frail barque, but the captain has great knowledge and experience, he can be safely trusted and the boat will safely reach the harbor if left to him. Worry is sinful. Jesus has promised peace to all who will believe him and accept it. If we are doubting and worrying we are disobedient and disloyal children. It is wrong to let our hearts be troubled or worried when Jesus has promised perfect peace. If we abide in him and do his work, he will take perfect care of us, and we can accept all things peacefully as from a loving Father's hand.

Christ left this world that he might prepare a place for us to be with him through eternity, and that he might prepare us for such a dwelling. Through his continual presence by his spirit he is doing to-day far greater works than he could ever have done as the Man of Galilee. And by his power to-day his followers are doing the 'greater works' which he promised they should do. On the day of Pentecost three thousand persons were converted to Christ, this was a far greater work than Jesus ever did when on earth. And to-day in foreign mission work his promise is proved true over and over again.

Jesus is God. By repentance and regeneration we become the sons of God and joint-heirs with Christ, but we can only call God our Father through the redeeming blood of Christ. Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, of one substance and spirit with his Father. Jesus was with God before the world was made, 'in the beginning' the Father, Son and Spirit were one as now.

We can only ask in Christ's name those things which Christ in himself would ask. The name stands for the character and person. We cannot ask God to do for us because of his love, those things which he sees are not best for us. Therefore, let us come to Christ daily with the reverent prayer of the disciples, 'Lord, teach us to pray.'

The Bible Class

'The Way.'—I. Cor. x., 13; Psa. xviii., 30; xxxvii., 34; lxvii., 2; lxxvii., 13; cxix., 1, 2, 30, 33; Isa. lv., 8, 9; Jer. xxi., 8; xxxii., 38-41; Ezek. xviii., 25-29; Matt. iii., 3; vii., 13, 14.

'The Truth.'—John i., 14, 17; iv., 23, 24; viii., 32; xiv., 6, 17; xv., 26; xvi., 13; xvii., 17, 19; xviii., 37; Eph. iv., 21-25; v. 9; vi., 14; II. Tim. ii., 15, 25; I. John i., 6-10; Josh. xxiv., 14; Psa. xv., 2; xxv., 5, 10.

'The Life.'—Gen. ii., 7; Deut. xxx., 15-20; Psa. xvi., 11; lxiii., 3; Prov. xiv., 27; Dan. xii., 2; Mark ix., 43-48; John i., 4; Rom. viii., 2, 6, 10, 38, 39; Col. iii., 3, 4; Rev. ii., 7, 10.

Lesson Hymn.

Whosoever cometh need not delay,
Now the door is opened, enter while you may,
Jesus is the true, the only living way,
'Whosoever will may come.'

Practical Points.

BY A. H. CAMERON.

A hut is a mansion when Jesus keeps company with the inmates. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. (Verses 2, 3.)

Faith in Christ is the best remedy for heart trouble. (Verse 1.)

Thomas or Philip represent a large class of Christians who are poorly posted in Spiritual matters. (Verses 5, 8.)

Jesus is the only way to heaven, the only truth that saves the lost, and the only life free from the taint of sin that yet suffered all that is implied in the second death. (Verses 4, 6, 7.)

The dual nature in Jesus was a matchless mystery. (Verses 9, 10, 11.)

Genuine faith is always accompanied by works. (Verse 12.)

More things are wrought by prayer than the world dreams of. (Verses 13, 14.)

Tiverton, Ont.

C. E Topic.

April 23.—How Christ makes use of common lives. The man with the pitcher.—Mark xiv., 12-16.

Junior C. E.

April 23.—What idols would God have us overthrow?—Isa. ii., 10-21. (A missionary meeting. Asia.)

Do-Operative Opening Exercises.

In one school a series of co-operative opening exercises are held. Individual classes lead the school in its responsive readings, the lot falling in time upon all willing to assist. Again, a musical class introduces an unfamiliar hymn, or renders a solo from Sunday-school hymnal, the school joining in the chorus. The primary class, in turn, is joyfully responsive in this, singing glad songs of praise upon invitation.—'Sunday-school Times.'

A personal interest in the scholars is necessary. No teacher ought to hold a position as teacher of those in whom she has no interest. There must be a bond of sympathy and affection between teacher and scholar if the greatest success is to be realized

The Catechism on Beer.

(By Julia Colman, National Temperance Publication House.)

LESSON IX.—DISEASE FROM BEER-DRINKING.

'Malt liquors are one of the main sources of indigestion.'—Dr. Norman Kerr.

What are some of the first effects of beer-drinking?

Nausea and purging, sourness of stomach, and bad breath.

Are these effects all due to the alcohol?

No, they are partly due to the foul water and the decayed matter in the beer.

Long before Abraham Lincoln was President of the United States, in closing up some business he had with a Mr. W——, the latter asked the company to drink. Mr. Lincoln excused himself, saying he never drank. But lager-beer was urged as innocent and wholesome, and Mr. Lincoln yielded and drank a glass. It made him very sick. When he was President this man came to a public reception, and Mr. Lincoln called out, 'How do you do, Mr. W——? I have never drank a glass of lager since.'

What are the first effects of the alcohol in the beer?

Partial paralysis of the nerves, flushing, giddiness, intoxication.

What effect is produced by the hops?

Drowsiness, stupidity, and an increase of intoxication.

How does beer afterward affect the looks?

It gives a bloated appearance, and a coarse, rough skin.

'If young girls would keep their complexions in a state of purity and fairness, they will religiously avoid the poison which causes the first dilatation of vessels, and which lays the first foundation for decay in their personal appearance.'—Dr. A. Carpenter.

How does it affect the weight?

Everyone who drinks beer in any quantity, soon begins to load himself with soft, unhealthy fat.

What is the fat of beer-drinkers?

Waste matter that ought to be carried out of the system.

What are some of the diseases caused by beer-drinking?

Rheumatism, liver complaint, Bright's disease of the kidneys, and many others difficult to cure.

'The first organ to be attacked is the kidneys; the liver soon sympathizes with them, and thus causes most frequently dropsy and Bright's disease, both of which are certain to end fatally. All beer-drinkers have rheumatism more or less, and they cannot recover from it so long as they drink beer. Beer-drinkers are peculiarly liable to pneumonia and typhoid fever.'—'Beer and the body.'

What case does Dr. Hargreaves report?

The post-mortem examination of a beer-drinker whose liver and one kidney were nearly gone.

'Liver and stomach may be seriously diseased when the drinker imagines himself to be in moderate health.'—'Alcohol and Science,' pp. 242, etc.

'Seven out of ten malt-liquor drinkers die of apoplexy or palsy.'—McNish.

'Indulgence in malt liquors is a common cause of stone in the bladder.'—Richardson.

What goes with all these diseases,
A foul condition of the blood.

In what other ways is this shown?

By the great difficulty of healing any wounds, however slight.

How do doctors regard such patients?

They dread being called upon to take charge of a patient who has been a habitual beer-drinker.

'They make bad patients. Their vital power is so lowered by their habits, that they are liable to drop off by any acute disease, such as fevers and pneumonia. In such cases these diseases get the credit of the death.'

How do surgeons regard such cases?

They are obliged to avoid treatment which they can give total abstainers with success.

'Their wounds do not heal up quickly and cleanly, but fester and suppurate for a long

time. Now the patient is brought suddenly face to face with his habits. He has broken a leg perhaps. The surgeon comes in "Are you a total abstainer?" "Yes, sir." "Cheer up, then, I can save your leg." But suppose the answer is, "No, sir." "What do you drink, beer?" "Yes." "Well, I'll do the best I can for you, but there is no use trying to save the leg." And most likely in the end the life goes too.'—'Guthrie's Physiology.'

How does the beer-drinker compare with other inebriates?

He is more generally diseased and more incurable.

Not the Place For My Boy.

('Union Signal.')

Joe Allen always was a good boy to work, especially when he could earn a little money as a result of his efforts. He often saw ways of getting a few pennies that other boys did not see or think of; so he became noted on this account among his brothers and sisters, and it was often said by them that he always had money.

This characteristic was not discouraged, for there were many wants in the little family that could not be supplied from the small income, as the father was dead and his older brother was in college and must be kept there some way, his mother said, making economy a necessity.

Joe went to school, and one day he learned, among other things, that a wholesale grocer at the farther end of the city hired boys to wait upon customers on Saturday, that being his most hurried day of all the week. He was filled with a great desire to be one of those boys, and his mother reluctantly gave her consent.

It was winter, and you can imagine a short, chubby fellow with dark hair, getting up before light, for the boys were expected early, eating a scanty breakfast and going off cheerfully to work all day in the cold store, for such stores are not warmed, you know. For his lunch he could eat anything he wished, as the other boys did, which he thought was an important consideration; to choose from a whole grocery store anything he wanted. But as it was cold and as there was little time allowed them in which to eat, it did not prove very satisfactory, in reality.

Forgetting the unpleasant circumstances he thoroughly enjoyed the day. He liked the hurry and bustle of the work and the rush of business generally. But the getting home at night was best of all; it was in his mind all day. Cold, tired and hungry he knew his mother would be watching for him. The fire would be bright and cheerful and there would be a nice hot supper waiting for him. And then the money he had earned seemed so much to him, though I may as well tell you it was only a dollar; but he had worked for it, it was peculiarly his own. If you have never tried it, you do not know how much more anything is prized that you have worked for, whether it is money or some other thing.

Joe's courage did not fail, and several weeks passed. He was one of the most trusty, reliable boys. Sometimes he was sent to the bank to carry the funds which had accumulated during the day and Mr. Brown gave him more than at first when he paid him at night, so he had a little more money to take home.

But his mother, who was ever watchful over her boy, found out something one night that quite startled her. It was a tiny little bottle that he brought home in his pocket. Mr. Brown had given it to him, and had said 'it was good to keep in the house,' and it was labelled 'Fine whiskey.' She looked at him reproachfully, too much astonished to speak. After supper she had a quiet, sensible talk with him. She found out that in the store liquor was kept for sale; there was a pile of boxes and barrels and behind them a little counter and a small dipper for customers to try the quality of each kind as they desired. 'Joe,' she said, putting her arm around him lovingly, 'that's not the place for my boy.' And Joe drew a long breath and said, 'I knew you would say so, mother.'

There are said to be ten Scottish dukes, five marquises, twenty earls, and five lords —forty in all—who have a direct financial interest in the continuation of the drink traffic. In England and Wales the names of no fewer than 172 members of the Upper House appear as owners of one or more licensed places.

Correspondence

Bear Point, N.S.

Dear Editor,—My home is on an island called Bon Portage. I am stopping with my grandparents, and go to school. Bon Portage is an island about one mile from the mainland. My papa is a lighthouse-keeper. It is a pretty place in summer. The steamer 'Express' ran ashore only a few yards from the Light in a very thick fog. The passengers all came ashore here. I have a little brother named Sheldon, three years old. I have two rabbits, but they stay in the woods most of the time. My day-school teacher's name is Miss Morrison. PEARL.

Petrolia, Ont.

Dear Editor,—I lived in St. Thomas, but am visiting my aunt in Petrolia before moving to Winnipeg. I have a pet dog named Sport. JESSIE (aged 9).

Glenora, Ont.

Dear Editor,—We live about half-a-mile from Glenora, and about four miles from Picton. Glenora is situated partly on top of a high hill, and partly below. The machine shops, and flouring mill are below the hill. The machine shop is run by a wheel four inches in diameter, the water being brought from a lake and run down the hill through large iron pipes. There is a Methodist church on top of the hill. There is a good wharf at which steamers call on their way for Montreal, Hamilton, Rochester, Kingston, Belleville and Napanee. They call for flour, water-wheels, etc. Glenora is noted for its scenery.

There is a lake on the mountain which is about one hundred and fifty feet above the Bay of Quinte. It gives power to run a machine shop in which water-wheels are made, and it also runs a flouring mill. The water from the lake runs to the top of the hill, and there it falls down over this steep and high hill. There is a cave in the rock close by the falls. There is a summer resort at Glenora and another summer resort on a little island called Glen Island. Steamers bring excursions to Glen Island and Glenora. You can see yachts pretty nearly every day in the summer sailing up and down the bay. I belong to the Sunday-school and the Junior Epworth League. Our members are to get all the old stamps they can, and our superintendent is going to send them away.
HAROLD E. F. (aged 13).

Wolfville, N.S.

Dear Editor,—My pet is a baby sister. She is a year old. I have a step-brother, and he is a soldier. He has been sent with others to Dawson City. We send him papers every little while. I expect I will laugh when I see this in the paper. My papa is a carpenter. A kind friend subscribed for this paper for me. IDA M. (aged 10).

Wetaskiwin, Alta.

Dear Editor,—I have been getting the 'Northern Messenger' from the Parsonage, Monte Bella, this last year. My auntie sends it to me. We like it very much. I worked hard to introduce it in our Sabbath-school as Sabbath-school literature for 1899, so our secretary has sent for twenty-five copies for this present year. In our schoolhouse we have Sunday-school every Sunday, and preaching, the Presbyterians one Sunday and the Methodist the next, and so on. Our Sunday-school is union. The schoolhouse is two miles and a half from here, and we have to ride to school winter and summer. I have three brothers, all older than myself; each one has a nice little pony and saddle, so they can go horseback riding. I have not learned to ride horseback yet. Our winters here are very cold. This country is not very well settled yet.

I have collected missionary money for the foreign missions two years, and I got nice prizes. Last year I got the 'Personal life of Queen Victoria.' TENA W. (aged 10).

Lower Stewiacke, N.S.

Dear Editor,—I always read the correspondence first to see if there are any letters from anyone I know. We saw one from one of my little cousins once. I have only one sister, eleven years old, and a little brother eighteen months. His name is Earle. When it is not too cold we take him out on the handsled, and he likes it very much. The only pets we have are two little kittens, one black and one grey.
EDITH P. (aged 7).

Springhill.

Dear Editor,—Springhill is quite a large town. My father is a farmer and a store keeper; he farms nearly all the time, because it is so healthy. We often go to the country in the summer and have a picnic. One time I went out to my uncle's; they were digging a well, and they put my sister down in a bucket; she was a little frightened. ELSIE R.

Smithfield.

Dear Editor,—We take the 'Messenger' and the 'Weekly Witness,' and enjoy reading them very much. We have a library in our Sunday-school. CLARA (aged 11).

Sebright.

Dear Editor,—I live on a farm near Sebright. I go to the Presbyterian Sunday-school. There are two churches and one store in this small village. It is very nice in the summer here, when we can get strawberries. VICTORIA N. (aged 12).

Park River, N.D.

Dear Editor,—I live near the school, and I go every day. I have a black dog, Carlo. We have a little Jersey calf named Lily.
FRANK (aged 11).

Macinquac, N.B.

Dear Editor,—I live on the bank of the St. John river, about twelve miles from Fredericton. Our schoolhouse is a quarter of a mile away, and I go every day. We have an evergreen Sunday-school, and I attend that too. I had a dog named Gelert, but he got poisoned. ERVINE H. (aged 8).

Lower Stewiacke, N.S.

Dear Editor,—I have taken the 'Messenger' since July, and enjoy reading it very much. I am saving all the numbers, so that I can get them bound. We live right near the schoolhouse, but we have no school now. I wonder if there are many of your little readers have as many relations as I have. I have one grandpa and two grandmas, thirteen uncles and fourteen aunts and thirty cousins. Some of them I have never seen. A good many of my cousins take the 'Messenger' too, and I hope they will see this letter. My little sister has a doll over two feet long. A gentleman who lives in the United States gave it to her.
MABEL (aged 11).

Hunter, N.D.

Dear Editor,—I like to read the letters in the 'Messenger.' I go to school every day. I have a little pet dog named Tasso. I have no brothers, only one sister. We get the 'Messenger' every Monday morning before school-time. My papa is postmaster. I got a sled on Christmas.
ROY McM. (aged 9).

Crofton.

Dear Editor,—My brother William and I look for the 'Northern Messenger' every week, and we would not like to do without it. I have read 'In His Steps, or what would Jesus do?' 'Winnie's Golden Key,' 'Ten Nights in the Bar-room,' 'A peep at Number Five,' 'Paul and his friends,' and a number of other books. ETHEL Z. (aged 12).

Sutton, Que.

Dear Editor,—I have no brothers, but one sister, named Mabel, four years old. My grandma lives with us. I live three miles from the church. I have been to school three years. I got two prizes last year, one from the teacher and one from the Inspector. I am trying to get one this year. I like my teacher. Mabel has been to school three days. I have taught her most of her letters. She likes to go to school.
LIZZIE J. K. (aged 9).

Grafton, Ont.

Dear Editor,—I live on a farm of one hundred acres. My grandfather lives across the road from our place. I am a member of the Baptist Church and Christian Endeavor. We have no Sunday-school in winter. I have read 'In His Steps, or what would Jesus do?' and I think it is a fine book. I have read several Pansy books, and also several of both the Endeavor and Sunday-school libraries. I think the 'Messenger' is an ideal Christian paper, and enjoy reading it very much. We take the 'Witness,' and think it is a nice paper. I hope you may live many years to publish your very interesting and useful papers. I am trying to lead a Christian life, and hope I may serve my Saviour better than ever before this year.
SUSIE A. H. (aged 14).

HOUSEHOLD.

The Bother.

'Dear, dear! what a bothersome baby,'
The care-wearied mother sighed out,
As she looked at the books and the play-things
That were everywhere scattered about;
At the great, dingy spot on the carpet,
Where he'd let grandma's medicine fall,
And the marks that the fat, baby fingers
Had left on the windows and wall.

'Such a baby for getting in mischief!
I can't keep him tidy and sweet;
Though I'm busy from daylight to bedtime,
The room never seems to be neat.
I never catch up with my sewing;
I've never a moment to rest;'
And she sighed as she threaded her needle,
With life and its worries oppress.

A slow, muffled sound on the pavement,
She looks through the mist-clouded pane
And sees, almost under her window,
A hearse going by in the rain.
There's a little white casket inside it,
And then by swift tears it is hid,
As she thinks of the household whose darling
Lies under the small coffin's lid.

She goes to the bed of her baby,
And kneels by the sleeper in tears,
And the prayer that goes up, mute and wordless,
The great, loving Father-Heart hears.
No longer the child seems a bother,
As she thinks of the hearse in the rain,
And the mother-arms, aching and empty,
Where the little dead baby has lain.

—Eben E. Rexford in 'The Christian.'

Rag Carpet Parties.

The rag carpet, after many years, has returned. It is once again fairly popular, and the rags that for a quarter of a century have been going to the ragman are now being treasured up, since, if they are of wool they are almost worth their weight in gold. Why the rag carpet ever did go out of style it is hard to determine, and its reappearance in society is not difficult to understand. Properly put together and made of a good assortment of rags it is exceedingly pretty, and withal easy to manufacture, all the knack needed being the skill necessary to cut the rags into strips, sew them together in lengths and wind them into a ball. For a small sum the rag carpet weaver does the rest.

Bathroom and study rugs are the chief uses of the rag carpet of to-day. It is not so much rag carpets, in fact, as it is rag carpet rugs. The rag carpet rug is not large, as a rule. Six feet by three would be quite an extraordinary size. The idea is to have quite a number of them, and these much smaller.

They clean easily and wear like iron. These facts commend them. Then, too, there is much sociability in their making. A rag carpet party is a jovial event, and a 'function' that, long neglected, is coming in again once more. The girls meet in the afternoon and sew rags until five or half-past five. Then the men, especially asked for this hour, begin to drift in, and there is afternoon tea. It is the modernizing of the old time 'sewing bee,' and it works marvellously well as an amusement.—Philadelphia 'Times.'

Economy Of Motion.

(Ada Melville Shaw in Michigan 'Advocate.')

She was washing my dishes, having taken pity on my 'spell' of rheumatism. We chatted of this and that, but I was studying my helper, wondering how she conquered the piled-up dishes and kettles at least a third faster than I could have done. I found that the whole secret lay in economy of motion. Every stroke of the dish-towel was applied just where it was needed, and only as often as necessary. By rank and file the array of dishes had moved from pan to drainer, and thence to tray. Not a dish was handled once more than was needful. When all was done, the skilled worker had no tension of lips, no furrowed brow, no sigh of wearied relaxation. She had begun, gone straight through and finished, without any waste of muscular motion and related nerve force.

False motions are the enemies that steal away the restful comfort of too many homes. The mother comes in from town. She takes off her hat. Bed and band-box are equidistant from her. She lays the hat on the former—a false motion, since the band-box must be visited at last. Thus, unthinkingly, she multiplies by two, three, six, every minute detail of the round of woman—work that is 'never done.'

A Child's Appetite.

The appetite of a healthy child, as a rule, is quite as susceptible of education, in both a right and a wrong direction, as are its mental or moral faculties; and parents in whose hands this education mainly rests, should give the subject careful consideration, since upon it the future health and usefulness of their children not a little devolve. We should all be rulers of our appetites instead of subject to them; but whether this be so or not, depends greatly upon early dietetic training. Many a loving mother, by thoughtless indulgence of her child, in season and out of season, in dainties and titbits that simply serve to gratify the palate, is fostering a 'love of appetite' which may ruin her child in years to come. There are inherited appetites and tendencies, it is true; but even these may be largely overcome by careful early training in right ways of eating and drinking. It is possible to teach very young children to use such food as is best for them, and to refrain from the eating of things harmful; and it should be one of the first concerns of every mother to start her children on the road to manhood and womanhood well trained in correct dietetic habits.—'Good Health.'

A Child's Education.

Accustom a child, as soon as it can speak, to narrate his little experiences, his chapter of accidents, his griefs, his fears, his hopes; to communicate what he has noticed in the world without, and what he feels struggling in the world within. Anxious to have something to narrate, he will be induced to give attention to objects around him, and what is passing in the sphere of his instruction, and to observe and note events will become one of his first pleasures; and this is the ground work of a thoughtful character.—'Alliance.'

One who recently visited Mrs. Cleveland was impressed with the extreme simplicity of the children's dresses, which were without ribbon, sash or ornament of any kind. The visitor said, 'I thought what an object lesson this was to tired, worn-out mothers who struggle so hard to ruffle and tuck and furbelow their children's dresses, instead of taking the time to cultivate their minds and hearts.'

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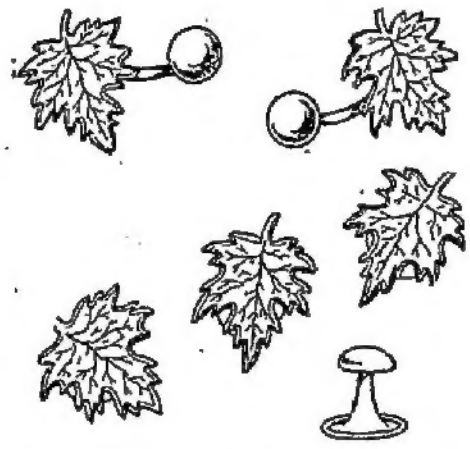

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Selected Recipes.

Fricasseed Eggs.—Melt one tablespoonful of butter, add one teaspoonful of chopped onion, two teaspoonfuls of flour, one-half teaspoonful of salt, and one-half salt-spoonful of pepper. Pour on slowly one cupful of milk and stir well. Cut four or six hard boiled eggs in slices and add to the mixture. Heat all together and sprinkle with one tablespoonful of finely chopped parsley.

Toast and Cheese.—Soak one cup of bread crumbs in one cup of milk for fifteen minutes. Melt one heaping teaspoonful of butter, add one-half cup of cheese broken in small pieces; stir until melted; add the crumbs with one beaten egg, one-half teaspoonful of salt and a few grains of cayenne. Cook three minutes. Serve on toast or wafers.

Rice and Hominy Griddle Cakes.—Mix two tablespoonfuls of flour with two teacups of cold rice or hominy and a little milk; add one or two eggs. Add as much more milk as may be necessary to give the desired consistency when cooked. Too much flour or eggs makes them close.

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